

INDO-GLOBAL SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY

Newsletter



Voices for Change

The National Level Public Hearing

Tribal women from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha presented their individual and community claims to land under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 before a jury at the national-level public hearing organised by IGSSS on 28 November 2011 at the Indian Social Institute (ISI), Delhi. The jury comprised Dr Charu Wali Khanna (Member, National Commission of Women), Ms Vasavi Kiro (Member, Jharkhand State



Commission of Women), Ms Madhu Sarin (Member, Drafting Committee, the Forest Rights Act), Dr Mohini Giri (Director, Guild of Services), Mr Indu Prakash Singh (Gender and Human Rights Activist), Mr Praveer Peters (Gender and Livelihood Activist), Ms Roma (Gender and Tribal Rights over Land Activist), Ms Govind Kelkar, (UN-Women), and Padamshri Ms Patricia Mukhim (Vice President, IGSSS, and Editor, The Shillong Times).



22 testimonials were presented at the public hearing. On the basis of the comments and suggestions from the panellists on the testimonials presented, the following broad recommendations emerged: a) Streamlining of the claim filing process; b) generating awareness on the FRA and its provisions; c) clarifying the role of the forest department in the implementation of the FRA; d) prioritising the processing of claims filed by single women; and e) institutionalising statutory monitoring process at the district level. IGSSS submitted the recommendations formally to Mr V.C. Deo, the Hon'ble Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, Government of India. Future plans for work on the issue include the hosting of regional workshops and continued advocacy at the national level, such that constructive interfaces are created between the field, civil society organisations, academics, activists, stakeholders in the Government and other key actors.

The public hearing was the culmination of a series of advocacy efforts planned on the issues of literacy, land rights and gender, as part of the European Union--Welthungerhilfe project-- "Empowering Women: Access and Ownership over Land and Land based Activities Through Education, Legal Literacy and Advocacy in Rural India". The project is being implemented with Welthungerhilfe and other four partner organisations, namely, SCRIA in Rajasthan, Agrabamee in Odisha, Swadhina in Jharkhand and IGSSS in Madhya Pradesh.

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Youth Development

Youth Development through SMILE interventions

IGSSS' youth intervention programme 'SMILE' (Student Mobilisation Initiatives and Learning through Exposure), which was launched in 1986 to provide a platform to discuss social issues, has entered a new phase. SMILE is known for its alternative learning model by students, professionals and institutions. In recent years, there has been an inclusion of livelihood in the agenda which involved activities such as entrepreneurship, skill development and access to credit, capacity development, leadership development and skill building for livelihood with an attempt on advocacy and networking as part of pro-youth policy. These activities were brought under the purview of three new clusters, such as North Eastern (Guwahati), Eastern (Kolkata) and Northern region (Kashmir).

A recent update from field:

- ❖ Through life skill training 249 youth between the age group of 16 to 24 were facilitated to discover their potential, their life choices, and to connect and live in harmony with the environment around them.
- ❖ More than 250 youth from various Youth Groups have been empowered to actively involve in taking up the local issues through the Right to Information (RTI) and Social Audit. It also got them recognition from local people for their active participation in Gram Sabha, involvement in accessing the Government schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), BPL schemes and Old Age pensions.
- ❖ Through livelihood initiatives, 109 youth have been trained in various trades and given exposure on agriculture and livestock, tailoring and computer. Two of the youth groups have initiated income-generation activities in the Northeast.
- ❖ National-level consultation for Youth Development was held in Delhi. 24 participants from regional SMILE team, representatives from CityMakers and PEARL who are actively interfacing with youth activities in their respective areas of work attended the consultation.



Youth Centric Development

A New Programmatic Approach for 2011-15

The 'Youth Centric Development' recognises the need to engage with youth as individuals with unique identities and a desire to learn, explore and understand their own potential as active citizens. The focus is on building leadership potential among the youth. Youth development does not see the young person as a 'problem' to be addressed or as a passive constituency receiving services.

In 'Youth Centric Development Approach,' the youth are seen as co-equal partners capable of working out viable solutions to the problems of local communities. To this effect, the youth are groomed as agents of societal change. This approach involves providing development inputs to youth to realise their own entitlements as citizens, so that they will be able to assess their own needs, aspirations, leadership potential, etc. This will empower them to engage with the programme activities, which will lead further to their own initiatives with local communities in terms of assessing their needs. As regards implementation, the programme will be localised reaching out to maximum number of youth.

Energy Access for Urban Poor in India



With a view to give an insight on the energy issues faced by the urban poor to the delegation from MISEREOR, Germany, a knowledge sharing meeting on 'Energy Access for Urban Poor in India' was held on 20 October 2011 at IGSSS, New Delhi. A panel of experts from organisations like The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), Greenpeace, Hazards Centre, Vasudha Foundation, Environics Trust, Himalaya Niti Abhiyan and St Joseph's Social Society shared their views on the topic.

Experts touched upon the political discussions going on in the country on the topic. Referring to the issue of subsidies, it was pointed out that subsidies on fuel and petrol mainly impact the rich and not the poor. The panel also brought forth the ground reality of the issue and said that the rich should learn from the poor how to efficiently use energy. There was a consensus that the poor need more access to energy than what they are being given. Equity does not necessarily mean providing more to the poor, but also providing less to the rich. The panel admitted that it is very hard to understand the current and future energy needs of the people, which is a major challenge. It was felt that there is a need for more innovations and cheap, reliable technologies to poor in urban and rural areas. Citing the example of compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulbs, it was highlighted that the CFL bulbs being provided in rural areas are of poor quality.

The panel also agreed on the government's lack of policies to address the issues of energy. Summing up the discussion, Mr Indu Prakash Singh, Technical Advisor to IGSSS' CityMakers Programme, said that it is violation of human rights on the part of the government for not providing energy access to the poor. He concluded by saying that the solution to the issues of energy should be sought from the perspective of the poor and not the rich.

World Habitat Day

IGSSS Bengaluru celebrated the World Habitat Day (WHD) on 3 October with a consultation cum discussion on the issue of homelessness. The event was organised to give recognition to the 'citymakers' (urban homeless citizens).

Ms Rajani, Programme Officer, IGSSS, Bengaluru, briefed on the state of shelter of the urban homeless who live in the most dehumanising conditions without adequate access to food, water, sanitation, health, legal identity and livelihood. Urban homeless include vegetable vendors, domestic workers, pouira karmikas, head loaders, rag pickers, construction labourers, etc., who contribute to the city's development, yet remain invisible to the society. They are denied all the basic fundamental rights and access to any of the welfare schemes of the government for lack of shelter and an address.



Mr Clifton D' Rozario, Advisor to Commissioners of the Supreme Court, gave an insight on the law suit on the homelessness issue which is going on in the Supreme Court. He briefed participants about the Supreme Court orders for the establishment of shelter homes in those cities whose population is more than 5 lakh. Mr Ramachandra Murthy, Joint Commissioner, Bruhat Bengaluru Municipal Corporation (BBMP) and Mr Venkatachalapathy, Deputy Commissioner (Welfare), BBMP, promised to open the night shelters for the homeless in the city at the earliest.

Participants also discussed the issues, which need to be taken up with the government and other key stakeholders, such as shelter homes, livelihood opportunities, identity cards to access various social service schemes and benefits, etc. Mr Shivabasavaiah, Joint Commissioner, Bommanahalli Zone, BBMP, Mr Devaraj, Joint Commissioner, Mahadevapura Zone, BBMP, Mr Shiva Kumar, President, Tax & Accounts, Standing Committee, BBMP, volunteers from the Civil Defense, representatives of Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and NGOs, teachers and students attended the programme, organised in collaboration with Civil Society Organisation Forum for the CityMakers, Karnataka.

TIMES CITY THE TIMES OF INDIA, BANGALORE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2011

Home still a dream for them

Photo for representation only



WORLD HABITAT DAY

SWINGING FORTUNES: The homeless are waiting for the government to show some commitment

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: Twenty-six-year-old Aruna came to Bangalore with her husband five years ago from her village near Shimoga in search of livelihood. But both ended up becoming rag-pickers as they did not find jobs. They did not have a home, forcing them to move from one place to another in the city with their five-year-old son.

Aruna is one among the 18,000 homeless in Bangalore. And the Karnataka government has just three weeks to submit a report to the Supreme Court on the facilities provided for them.

"With no budgetary provision by the BBMP for the homeless and lack of commitment on the government's part, it's hell for the homeless in here. The October 31 deadline has been extended several times but will not be done this time," said advocate Clifton D'Rozario, state adviser to the commissioners of the Supreme Court.

The issue was discussed at length on Monday, observed as World Habitat Day, at an event organized by the CSO forum for the CityMakers (Homeless Citizens)-Karnataka. Last year, the Supreme Court directed all state governments to provide one standard-size shelter with basic facility for the homeless.

Donor Visits

MISEREOR Official Visits IGSSS Eastern Zone

Ms Anna Dirksmeier, representative of MISEREOR, Germany, met the staff of IGSSS Eastern Zone and partner organisations of the PEARL initiative on 27 October at Seva Kendra, Kolkata. The objective of the meeting was to share the progress and strategies adopted under PEARL intervention and to give an update of the achievements from the field. The discussions also centred on the different roles being carried out by IGSSS at macro level and its partners at grassroots level.

Anna had a glimpse of all the IEC (information, education and communication) material for mobilising the deprived communities and stakeholders under PEARL. Representatives of partner organisations also shared the details of their organisations and project interventions.



Anna briefed on MISEREOR's functions, priority issues, geographical focuses and strategies in India. She shared the link between micro-level poverty in India and macro-level issues of globalisation. She spoke on issues like urbanisation, industrialisation, displacement, effect of climate changes, etc., and initiatives like advocacy and lobbying at local level and MISEREOR's interventions at international level. Anna also shared that MISEREOR is a learning organisation and issues like urban poverty, climate change and adaptation are included in their interventions.

Mr Sadananda Chakraborty, Manager, Eastern Zone, briefed Anna about the programme strategy, partner organisations' role in programme intervention and state-level advocacy initiatives. The results achieved and the challenges faced, and the various developmental issues were also shared. Partner organisation from Odisha shared about the strategies for getting land rights through the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and the research study on identification of Below Poverty Line (BPL) beneficiaries. The representatives from Bihar shared about the movement for getting revenue land and mobilising barefoot cadres for taking the approach forward. The state-level alliance from Jharkhand shared the initiative for strengthening network for the promotion of sustainable livelihood options. The SMILE team presented their efforts in mobilising youth and making them change-agents for the society. The meeting concluded with some clarifications from the partners regarding MISEREOR's advocacy strategy.

MISEREOR Officials visit CityMakers Programme in Lucknow and Kanpur



German Students at IGSSS

In early October, a youth group of six girl students from Berlin, Germany, visited IGSSS. The group has been instrumental in raising funds for the disadvantaged children in India. They were guided by Mr Benjamin Putter from MISEREOR. After an orientation at the head office about IGSSS' work and the CityMakers programme, the team was taken to meet the women and children at Regarpura Shelter in Karol Bagh.

Mr K P Fabian, President, IGSSS, felicitated the six girls with a memento, an Indian scarf and a diya (lamp), as Diwali was just around the corner. The students sang a song of thanksgiving.



In October 2011 we, that is the youth group 'Lutherix für Xertifix', which consists of six girls aged 17 to 21, from Berlin, Germany had the occasion to visit the Indo-Global Social Service Society in Delhi. We see it as our mission to fight child labour, having special regard on child labour in Indian quarries. In the past we raised 15.000€ (ca. 1.019.281Rs.) so that building material for a school and a kindergarten of a quarry in South India could be bought and other improvements could be made as well. From our very start in 2006 we collaborated with MISEREOR and are happy to call Benjamin Pütter our friend and mentor. It was he who introduced us to this project.

After raising the funds we wanted to actually get to know the people in India, as well as their projects. And this is how we got to meet the staff of IGSSS and visit one of their amazing programme, the "CityMakers". Before visiting the shelters we had a very hearty welcome at the office and there we were shown a brief profile of IGSSS which explained their work and programmes.

Later on we visited one of the City Makers shelters and interacted with the people living there. After introducing ourselves and sharing a few cookies with the children we all overcame our shyness and started playing and singing with children and adults. We also shared pictures of our homes, lives and families, talking about differences, as well as similarities between Germany and India and explaining 'snow', etc. This was a very special experience for us; even though we do not speak the same language or share the same culture, we understood each other so well. We felt so welcomed and we were touched by the wide smiles and all the laughs we shared together. It was impressive to see how strong and outspoken the people are to share their stories with us. We were touched by the close, familiar relationship the city makers have with the staff. This shows how committed is the CityMaker's Team.

One week later we had yet another opportunity to visit IGSSS and this time we were given a different, but lovely surprise. We got to hear the most touching speech of thanks for our commitment and – let's be honest – we really got teary-eyed. We didn't expect any of this since it is IGSSS that is celebrating 50 years of extraordinary social commitment! We were simply overwhelmed!

So now it's our turn to say a big, wholehearted THANK YOU! Thanks for having us, for giving us not only information, but experience and inspiration, thanks for your warmth and kindness! We appreciate it so much – still today – and hope to stay in touch with you all!

It has really been a pleasure!

Yours,

Lutherix für Xertifix

ED's Desk



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2012!

One more year went by. For IGSSS the year 2011 has been a milestone year with its 50 years of service to humanity being celebrated. It was the times of joy and reflection; we the large family of IGSSS did it with great delight, amazing style and remarkable elegance. So as we turn the new leaf, 2012, it is with gratitude and with much expectations of doing more.

At IGSSS we have always been proud of our grassroots involvement and bringing forward the realities of the underprivileged to the national notice. The National Public Hearing on the Forest Rights Act, 2006 was one such initiative organized in November 2011. The cases presented were from the remotest of places of Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh. This was part of our project funded by the European Commission under the aegis of Welthungerhilfe. I am happy to share that there was immediate follow up to the deliberations with the cases being shared with the Minister for Tribal Affairs, Mr. V. C. Deo. He assured us of immediate action. As a follow up, IGSSS plans to have such hearing at the State level too, in Odisha and Jharkhand.

One of the good indicators of any organisation is how much there is enjoyment doing the work. The National Program Review of IGSSS, though an internal exercise, was a wonderful time of learning through fun added with serious reflections on strategies and impact of our programs. "Two days of great learning and fun! The best part was giving almost everyone an opportunity to lead something or the other", Ashraf one of the participants commented.

Before I conclude, I must congratulate my team and thank them for being a passionate and contributing part of the growth of IGSSS.

To make IGSSS a better place;

To devote their best to humanity;

To keep the flag of IGSSS flying high;

To bring more joy and smiles on people's face;

To transform each of our lives as blessed by sharing;

Thank you Team IGSSS, let's keep on doing what we are good at – enjoying the work we do – OUR CALL!

Wish you all a very Happy New Year.
May the Peace and Joy of Christmas
be with you and your loved ones each day of the New Year.

In gratitude for allowing me to lead...

Smiles... Joseph





Learning and Sharing Meet, Srinagar, Kashmir



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